

Is Shaykh al-Albani's Authenticating of Hadith Accurate?

The brother says that a group of people say that the authentication of al-Albani isn't accurate in comparison to the early scholars, and this is true, whether he authenticated the hadiths or weakened the hadiths, because the Usul that he follows in his authenticating and weakening is upon the Usul of the later scholars, upon the Usul of ibn al-Salah, upon the Usul of al-Hafidh al-Iraqi, upon the Usul of ibn Hajr. He doesn't follow in his Usul, the Usul of Yahya ibn Said al-Qattan, the Usul of ibn Mahdi, the Usul of Imam Ahmad, the Usul of al-Bukhari, Usul of Muslim, or upon the Usul of the early scholars, so he goes along the Usul of the later scholars, not the Usul of the early scholars.

And if those were the means that he goes along, it is considered a weak means, so usually the end result would be inconsiderable. So consequently, he has many things that he authenticates which goes against the Methodology of the early scholars, or he weakens that which has a clear difference to the Manhaj of the early scholars, because the differences between the early scholars and the later scholars are many.

I will mention the most important of those differences to clarify the intent and meaning.

So [the first matter], from among that, *al-Tadlis* [covering up a break in the chain]:

Whenever *al-Tadlis* is proven in the hadith, then it's a *illa* (hidden defect), and there's no dispute in this. Whereas, the later scholars consider the "*'an 'ana*" [i.e. narrates by using the term 'an (from)] of the person described with Tadlis as "Tadlis", and this hasn't been stated by any of the early scholars, and al-Albani follows this principle, of the Usul of the later scholars, not the Usul of the early scholars.

So he says about the hadith that it has 'an 'ana of al-Hassan, it has 'an 'ana of Qatadah, there is 'an 'ana of Abi Ishaq al-Sabi'l, there is 'an 'ana of al-Amash, there is 'an 'ana of ibn Jurayj, there is 'an 'ana of ibn al-Zubayr, and he defects the hadiths in this way, he has weakened hadiths in Muslim upon this way, and none of the early scholars were upon this Methodology, and its not known from any of the Imams that they defected a hadith by 'an 'ana of a Mudallis or the person described with Tadlis, rather the early scholars say "*Dalas*", and they do not say "'an 'an."

So, if it's proven that he Dalas [cheated], we will defect the Hadith because this is a disconnection, and if he 'an 'an and he didn't "Dalis", merely a 'an 'ana, this doesn't affect [the Hadith], and this is what the early scholars are upon, and this is from the enormous differences between the early and later scholars.

The second matter - *Ziyadat ul-Thiqdah* [The addition of a trustworthy narrator]:

The Madhab of the Fuqaha and Mutakalimeen is that the addition of a trustworthy narrator is accepted in all cases, and many of the later scholars have followed this. So, ibn Hajr says in al-Nukhba, "and the addition of its narrator is accepted, as long as it doesn't go against that whom is more authentic."

And this is not the Manhaj of the [early] Imams, and he has determined/stipulated the Manhaj of the Early Scholars in Kitab al-Nukat, upon the book of ibn al-Salah, and in that book, he has overlook/neglected in determining the Usul of the early Imams in this matter...so some of the later scholars, or a group of later scholars as it's the statement of the Fuqaha', that the addition of a trustworthy narrator is accepted, and this is plenty in the authenticating of the later scholars, "This is an addition of a trustworthy narration, therefore its accepted." The early scholars do not give the addition an absolute/general ruling.

So, at times they would accept the addition, and sometimes they would reject the addition, and they do not give an absolute/general ruling.

The third matter - *Raising weak Hadiths to Hasan by Shawahid* (finding supporting narrations):

The early scholars do not expand in that, and among the later scholars, there is severe expansion. That more of their authentication & Hasan gradings is when Hadith comes from different chains. And that is why the authentications by the later scholars have exceeded 50,000 Hadiths, and this is an exaggeration in the authenticating of Hadiths, and many of that is *Munkar*, it has no basis to it. The issue is not a hadith or 2 hadiths, when the Hadiths reach 5000 hadiths, 4000 are all Munkar [Denounced].

The early scholars did not call a Hadith, *Hasan by Shawahid* except by well-known conditions and guidelines as a methodology that they had. So from that, they don't call a hadith, Hasan by Shawahid in the Usul [can't be the main hadith which Fiqh and rulings are derived from the hadith], and they do not accept it. And from that, is that they don't call a hadith, Hasan by Shawahid if it goes against an authentic hadith. And from that, is that they don't call a hadith, Hasan by Shawahid if there's a liar, or a person accused of fabricating or a fault or a *Nakarah* (discrepancy) in the *Isnad* (chain).

The fourth matter - *Al-Tafarrud* (singular narrations):

The early scholars would consider the issue of *Tafarrud* a great concern, and they would sometimes not accept the Hadith of the Muttafarid even if he was Trustworthy (*Thiqah*). And usually as a methodology that they had, they would reject the Hadith of the *Saduq* (truthful narrator) in the Usul.

And this isn't taken into consideration by the later scholars, they do not differentiate between what is in the Usul [the main hadith which Fiqh and rulings are derived from in the hadith & chapter] and what is in other than the Usul, and by the end result of the inability to apply this methodology, they authenticate many *Munkar Hadiths*. Because the hadith of the Saduq or the Hadith of Thiqah who doesn't narrate a lot of Hadiths, and isn't known by many singular narrations, if he makes Tafarrud in an Asl, then this is at a place of dispute.

So from that, the hadith that was narrated by Ahmad and Abu Dawud in his Sunan from the chain of Muhammad ibn Ishaq from Abi 'Ubaydah ibn Abdillah ibn Zamah from his father from his mother from Umm Salamah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"On this day you have been allowed to take off ihram, when you have thrown the stones at the jamrahs, that is, everything prohibited during the state of ihram is lawful except intercourse with a woman. If the evening comes before you go round this House (the Ka'bah), you will remain in the sacred state (i.e. Ihram), just like the state in which you were before you threw stones at the jamrahs."

And this report is Munkar, it's not possible to accept the Tafarrud of ibn Ishaq in it, and even if the Tafarrud of ibn Ishaq was accepted, it's not possible to accept the Tafarrud of Abi 'Ubaydah, and this is a followed principle among the early scholars, that in such a situation, the Tafarrud of the Saduq is not accepted who is not known with precision/accuracy and itqan (firmness/minimal errors), and a person who narrates many ahadith.

And this is merely an example, for the examples are many. The later scholars do not look except at what seems to be apparent of the chain and what ibn Hajr said in al-Taqreeb "*Thiqah*" or "*Saduq*" and in the end, he says, "Its chain is authentic".

And this is the **fifth matter**; ***that the later scholars go by the apparent look of the chains, they authenticate based upon this:***

As for the early scholars, then no. They look at the chain and look at the matn (text), and when they look into the Isnad (chain), they look at several aspects:

The first aspect: The trustworthiness of the narrators.

The second aspect: *Al-Samaat* [Whether narrations have met], they stress on the Samaat a lot.

The third aspect: *Al-Tafarrud* [the narrator is alone in narrating a hadith], they stress on the chain and the Tafarrud.

The fourth aspect: *Al-Mukhalafah* [The differences/oppositions between the narrators], they look at this very deeply.

The fifth aspect: *Al-Ikhtilaf* [inconsistencies in who he's narrating from], they look into it very deeply, sometimes they would rule upon it with Idtirab (shakiness/confusion).

The early scholars would consider this a very great concern; they wouldn't be heedless to any of these aspects.

This sixth matter - The Majhul (unknown) Hadith:

The later scholars weaken the hadith of Majhul al-Ayn, or before that, they settled upon categorising Majhul into **two** types:

Majhul Hal [unknown situation - whose integrity is unknown but there's nothing negative attributed to him] and *Majhul 'Ayn* [completely unknown]. So, they weaken the hadith of Majhul al-'Ayn and some of them weaken the hadith of Majhul al-Hal, and some of them authenticate it. But as for the early scholars, then no. They mention conditions for a man, whenever he would be considered Majhul and whenever he wouldn't be considered Majhul.

So, if he narrates from a narrator who's trustworthy many times, who is not known to narrate from the weak narrators, nor from the Unknown, then this would cause his *Jahalah* [unknownness] to be raised by the one who he narrated from. And they stipulate that his narrator must be consistent and not make Tafarrud in an Asal, and that he doesn't go against the trustworthy narrators, and this isn't taken into consideration among the later scholars. And it's narrated from the early scholars that if a narrator, narrates from a group of trustworthy narrations, his *Jahalah* [unknownness] would be raised from him, and by this, they make the issue of Tafarrud as an issue of Mukhalafah.

So these are the differences or some of the differences between the Early and the Later scholars, and by

applying these principles, your Usul [Foundations] would become upright, and if the Foundation is upright, the branches would follow, and the end result becomes stable/good. And with the deficiency of applying these principles, you will destabilise the Usul, and if you've destabilised the Usul, shakiness/destabilisation would be found in the branches, giving the poor end result.

- Answered by the Imām, Al-Hāfidh Shaykh Sulaymān Ibn Nāsir al-'Alwān (فك الله أسرته).